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ABSTRACT

In this lesson, each fourth-grade student is asked to choose a famous person who was born in his/her state, research the person's contributions to history, write a monologue, and then perform the monologue using a costume and/or a prop. The lesson offers an overview; suggests lesson length and grade level; lists subjects and subtopics; cites dimensions of learning and intelligences being addressed; notes equipment and materials needed; lists teacher resources; and addresses National Standards for Arts Education and other standards. It also cites instructional objectives and strategies; provides a detailed, step-by-step instructional plan; and suggests assessment and extension activities. (NKA)

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The Kennedy Center ARTSEDGE

Curricula, Lessons and Activities

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Historical Figure: A Monologue

Resource Type: lesson

Length: 3 to 4 days

Grade: 4

Subjects: Language Arts, Performing Arts, Social Studies

Subtopics: English, History, Literature, Theater, Video

Intelligences Being Addressed:

- Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence
- Interpersonal Intelligence
- Intrapersonal Intelligence
- Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence

Dimensions of Learning:

- Acquisition and integration of knowledge
- Attitudes and perceptions about learning
- Extension and refinement of knowledge
- Meaningful use of knowledge
- Productive habits of the mind

Overview: In this lesson, students will choose a famous person who was born in their state, research the person's contributions to history, write a

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monologue, and perform their monologue with a costume and/or a prop.

Equipment:

- Computer: Mac or PC with Internet access
- VCR:
- Video Camera

Media & Materials:

- Book: containing historical biographies,
- Video: Richard T. Heffron's *North and South*,

Printouts: This lesson does not have any printouts.

Student Supplies: Students must supply some type of costume or prop that relates to their character.

Other Materials:

Related Textbooks:

Teacher Internet Resources: **Lesson and Extension Specific Resources:**

- **Famous People**
  http://www.50states.com/bio/

  This resource provides the names of important figures in history, organized by the state in which they lived.

- **Historical Characters Bios**
  http://www.flagday.org/livingAmerianFlag/Historical_Bios.html

  This Web site provides biographies of historical individuals, such as Clara Barton, Francis Scott Key, Harriet Tubman, and George Washington.

- **National Women's Hall of Fame**

http://www.greatwomen.org/

This site provides a detailed biography of women who have made important contributions in the history of the United States.

- **Presidents' Hall**
  http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/

  On this resource, you will find biographies of every president in the history of the United States.

General Internet Resources:

- **America's Library, Library of Congress**
  http://www.americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi

  This site includes links and information on American inventors, politicians, performers, and activists. It also provides timelines, state explorations and other kid-friendly activities for students.

- **Creative Drama & Theater Education Resource Site**
  http://www.creativedrama.com

  Creative Drama provides activities for classroom use and other drama links for educators. Classroom ideas, plays for performance, theater games, and a book list are among the available links on this site.

- **HistoryWired**
  http://historywired.si.edu/index.html

  Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American History provides users access to hundreds of museum artifacts, accompanied by informative descriptions. Be sure to check out the interactive timeline.

- **PBS's American Experience "Way Back"**
  http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/kids/index.html

  This site examines the recent history of America for kids through several themes and activities, including technology, the history of flight, and the gold rush.

National Standards for Arts Education:

- K-4 Theatre Content Standard 1 : Script writing by planning and recording improvisations based on personal experience and heritage, imagination, literature, and history
- K-4 Theatre Content Standard 2 : Acting by assuming roles and interacting in improvisations
- K-4 Theatre Content Standard 3 : Designing by visualizing and arranging environments for classroom dramatizations
- K-4 Theatre Content Standard 5 : Researching by finding information to support classroom dramatizations
- K-4 Theatre Content Standard 6 : Comparing and connecting art forms by describing theatre, dramatic media (such as film, television, and electronic media), and other art forms

Click here for additional information on the National Standards for Arts Education

Other National Standards:

- History K-4, #3
- Language Arts

Source of Standards:

For more on the Standards in other subjects, please refer to the Mid-continent Regional Education Laboratory (McREL) website.

State Standards, if any:

To search the State Arts Standards, please visit the National Conference of State Legislatures website.

Instructional Objectives:

Students will be able to:

Investigate the life a famous person born in their state.

- Write a monologue.
- Practice at home.
- Perform the monologue in costume.

Political Systems:

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the historical development and current status of principles, institutions, and processes of political systems in their state and the United States, in general.

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Indicator: Students will analyze historical examples in which individuals and groups brought about civic improvement.

Peoples of the Nation and World:

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the history, diversity, and commonality of the peoples of the nation and world, the reality of human interdependence, the need for global cooperation, and a multicultural perspective.

Indicator: Students will analyze the characteristics and contributions of various cultures in the development of their state and the United States, in general.

Valuing Self and Others:

Students will demonstrate the attainment of a positive self-concept and empathy toward others in order to improve interaction among individuals and groups in our democratic society.

Indicator: Students will analyze the impact of social institutions and the media on the behavior of individuals and groups.

Theatre: Creative Expression and Production:

Students will demonstrate the ability to explore the creative process through theatrical activities and to apply theatrical knowledge, principles, and practices to collaborative theatre presentations.

Indicator: Students will observe, record, and discuss ways that people communicate through words and actions.

Strategies:	Research in the library and on the Internet Classroom presentation Teacher-directed discussion Prioritizing collected information Writing to inform
Instructional Plan:	Discuss and record on an organizer the different ways one can find out about a famous person. Show a small segment of actor Hal Holbrook performing Abraham Lincoln in *North and South*. Discuss and record what makes his performance so effective. Make a list of the reasons why the performance kept the class' attention. (Photocopy the list and pass one out to each student).

Tell the students that they are going to do a similar presentation, and pass out a list of famous people. Explore the following sites to come up with a list of your own:

- National Women's Hall of Fame
- Flag Day's Historical Characters Bios
- The White House's Presidents' Hall

The list of historical figures can also be compiled from all the people the class has already studied during the school year. Some examples from the state of Maryland are: the Calverts, Margaret Brent, Samuel Chase, Charles, Carroll, John E. Howard, William Paca, Thomas Stone, Frederick Douglas, Harriet Tubman, Benjamin Banneker, Francis Scott Key, Mary Pickersgill, Thurgood Marshall, Edgar Alan Poe, and Babe Ruth. To view examples of important figures born in different states, visit http://www.50states.com/bio.

Model the writing of a monologue. Have the students list a number of facts they know about Abraham Lincoln. Pass out a short biography about Lincoln from the Internet or encyclopedia. Add any additional facts. Based on all the information, show the students how to write a number of sentences in the first person and write a brief monologue—you don't have to write about his whole life. Perform this short monologue for the class.

Have the students take some time to pick a famous person they would like to study and allow them to list some of the details they want to share about this person. Have books available for students to use to get more details. Some might go to the library or use the Internet. Allow the students a few days to finish compiling information.

In class, students should begin to write their monologue. Conference with the students about which aspects of the famous person's life might be more interesting to tell in a short, five-minute monologue. They may have to complete the writing of the monologue at home. Students should practice their performance at home. They should have at least one piece of costume (hat, scarf, jacket, shawl, beard, etc.) for their presentation.

Students should perform their monologues in front of the rest of the class. Assign five or six students a day to present their monologues. Teachers may videotape these performances for use in assessing the student's work.

Assessment: After the students present their monologues, discuss what aspects of a monologue make it strong and effective. Record these aspects on the board. Use a rubric to assess each presentation. If necessary, review the videotaped performances of the monologues to keep track of each student's performance.

Extensions: Upon completion of the presentations of the monologues, discuss the value of this activity. Have the students write an article on the famous person they would most like to meet and why

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